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NATO aide admits giving Soviets data

LONDON (UPI) — Canadian Hugh Hambleton admitted at his espionage trial yesterday that, without permission, he passed on to Soviet agents NATO information and his work could be "classified" as spying.

Hambleton made the admission during a dramatic exchange with the prosecutor, Sir Michael Havers, who asked him if his giving secret documents to the Soviets in Paris, where the Canadian worked for NATO, was spying.

"I suppose you could classify it that way," replied Hambleton, who is 60.

Hambleton testified in his own defense as his trial at London's Old Bailey entered its second week.

The former economics professor at Laval University, Quebec, is charged with two counts under the Official Secrets Act of spying for the Soviets while he worked in NATO's economic and financial department in Paris between 1956-61.

He claimed initially that he was working for French and Canadian intelligence as a "triple" agent, feeding low-grade information on behalf of both countries to the Soviets, while also keeping Canadian agents abreast of

what the French secret service was up to.

But under pressure from Havers, Hambleton admitted that 80 percent of the hundreds of secret documents he passed were given without the authorization of his alleged French or Canadian intelligence contacts, which the prosecution alleges never existed.

"You went on handing over NATO documents not believing you had permission to do it," Havers challenged.

"Yes," said Hambleton.

Havers said, "You were a spy." "I prefer not to answer," said Hambleton.

Hambleton under questioning admitted that after passing one document to the Soviets, he was blackmailed into handing over more.

"But why?" Havers asked. "If you were a double agent, it wouldn't matter a tinker's cuss what NATO found out about what you were passing the Russians."

Hambleton gave no answer.

Havers, Britain's attorney general, called the remark about reporting on France to Canada "one of the most serious allegations you could make against NATO states and embarrassing for NATO too."



Canadian Hugh Hambleton claims he was blackmailed into spying.

He said he would ask Canada to check on Hambleton's alleged Montreal contact, named by the defendant as Jacques la Liberté. Three Canadian Mounties are expected to testify during the trial.

The prosecution, bringing the case as a member of NATO, contends Hambleton has been a spy for more than 30 years.